

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-22. (Cancelled)

23. (New) Apparatus for sharing data over a network having a plurality of network-connected terminals, each terminal comprising

a visual display;

a processor;

storage; and

memory;

wherein said memory in each terminal includes:

a data object that contains data and that is duplicated to each of said other network-connected terminals, such that there exists within the network a set of duplicated data objects;
and

computer program instructions for normal operations comprising:

periodically providing over said network an update of the data contained in said data object,

for said set of duplicated data objects, establishing one of said data objects as a master data object, wherein said master data object is responsible for maintaining consistency between the data in the data objects in said set, and

when the terminal that maintains said master data object becomes unavailable, determining which of said data objects in the set should be master data object and establishing said data object as master data object.

24. (New) Apparatus according to claim 23, wherein said instructions to maintain data consistency between duplicated objects monitor CPU usage and network bandwidth utilization.

25. (New) Apparatus according to claim 24, wherein a terminal becomes unavailable when its CPU usage exceeds a threshold.

26. (New) Apparatus according to claim 24, wherein a terminal becomes unavailable when its bandwidth utilization exceeds a threshold.

27. (New) Apparatus according to claim 23, wherein a terminal becomes unavailable when it is switched off.

28. (New) Apparatus according to claim 23, wherein a terminal becomes unavailable when its connection to the network is lost.

29. (New) A method of accessing data over a network of terminals, wherein each of said terminals maintains a data object that is duplicated over the network to each of said other terminals, such that there exists within the network a set of duplicated data objects, and

periodically provides over said network an update of the data contained in its data object; said method comprising:

for said set of duplicated data objects, establishing one of said data objects as a master data object, wherein said master data object maintains consistency between the data in the data objects in said set; and

when the terminal that maintains said master data object becomes unavailable, determining which of said data objects in the set should be master data object and establishing said data object as master data object.

30. (New) A method according to claim 29, wherein each of said terminals monitors its own CPU usage and network bandwidth utilization.

31. (New) A method according to claim 30, wherein a terminal becomes unavailable when its CPU usage exceeds a threshold.

32. (New) A method according to claim 30, wherein a terminal becomes unavailable when its bandwidth utilization exceeds a threshold.

33. (New) A method according to claim 29, wherein a terminal becomes unavailable when it is switched off.

34. (New) A method according to claim 29, wherein a terminal becomes unavailable when its connection to the network is lost.

35. (New) A terminal for sharing data over a network having a plurality of network-connected terminals, comprising

- a visual display;
- a processor;
- storage; and
- memory;

wherein said memory includes:

- a data object that contains data and that is duplicated to each of said other network-connected terminals, such that there exists within the network a set of duplicated data objects;

and

- computer program instructions for normal operations comprising:
 - periodically providing over said network an update of the data contained in said data object,

for said set of duplicated data objects, storing information as to which of said data objects is a master data object that is responsible for maintaining consistency between the data in the data objects in said set, wherein any of said duplicated data objects in the set may be a master data object, and

- when the terminal that maintains said master data object becomes unavailable, determining which of said data objects in the set should be master data object and establishing said data object as master data object.

36. (New) A computer-readable medium having computer-readable instructions executable by a computer during normal ongoing operations such that, when executing said instructions, a computer will:

maintain a data object in memory that is duplicated to computers connected over a network, such that there exists within the network a set of duplicated data objects;

periodically provide over said network an update of the data contained in its data object;

for said set of duplicated data objects, store information as to which of said data objects is a master data object that is responsible for maintaining consistency between the data in the data objects in said set, wherein any of said duplicated data objects in the set may be a master data object, and

when the terminal that maintains said master data object becomes unavailable, determine which of said data objects in the set should be master data object and establish said data object as master data object.

37. (New) A computer-readable medium according to claim 36, wherein the role of master data object is transferred to a different computer when the computer that maintains said master data object becomes unavailable.

38. (New) A method according to claim 36, wherein each of said computers monitors its own CPU usage and network bandwidth utilization.

39. (New) A computer-readable medium according to claim 38, wherein a computer becomes unavailable when its CPU usage exceeds a threshold.

40. (New) A computer-readable medium according to claim 38, wherein a computer becomes unavailable when its bandwidth utilization exceeds a threshold.

41. (New) A computer-readable medium according to claim 37, wherein a computer becomes unavailable when it is switched off.

42. (New) A computer-readable medium according to claim 37, wherein a computer becomes unavailable when its connection to the network is lost.